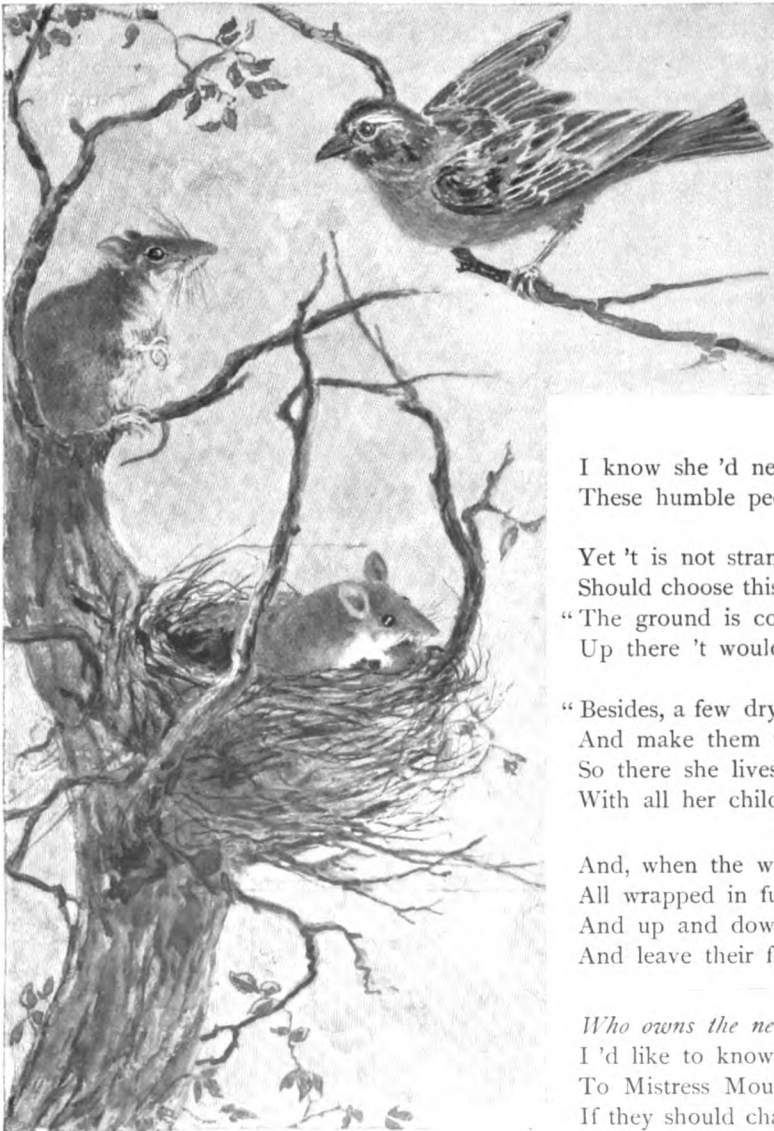


LODGERS IN THE NEST.

BY EDITH M. THOMAS.

No birds, they say, in last year's nests!
What, ho! but there are other guests!
No songs they sing, no wings have they,—
These quiet people dressed in gray.

My Lady Bird her nest did line
With down of silkweed soft and fine;
And here and there with dainty skill
She trimmed it with a lichen frill.



A rose-bush blossomed at her door,
And dropped pink petals on her floor;
But months ago away she flew,
And all her well-fledged nestlings, too.

And much surprised to-day she 'd be,
Could she the present lodgers see;

I know she 'd never bid them stay —
These humble people dressed in gray.

Yet 't is not strange that Mistress Mouse
Should choose this nest for her own house.
"The ground is cold, the grass is dead;
Up there 't would warmer be," she said.

"Besides, a few dry leaves I 'll get,
And make them in a coverlet."
So there she lives this very day,
With all her children, dressed in gray.

And, when the winter sun peeps out,
All wrapped in furs they run about;
And up and down they gaily go,
And leave their footprints in the snow.

Who owns the nest, I have not heard.
I 'd like to know what Lady Bird
To Mistress Mouse, next spring, will say,
If they should chance to meet some day!